

CASE STUDY:

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

Providing exciting opportunities for video and active learning

Overview

The University of Adelaide is ranked in the top 1% of universities worldwide, with an esteemed reputation for its pursuit and discovery of new knowledge.

Renowned for its progressive thinking and proud legacy of many firsts, the University was the first in Australia to admit women into academic courses, grant degrees in sciences and music, as well as contributing to many globally significant research breakthroughs over its 142-year history.

Today, the University of Adelaide remains at the forefront of new developments, working on disruptive technologies including drought resistant plants, computers that can see, IVF driven by artificial intelligence and nano space satellites.

This spirit of innovation continues to underpin the academic vision at Adelaide, and as part of its ten-year strategy, the University has embarked on an ambitious project to embrace active learning in all its faculties.

Moving away from the traditional model where a lecturer delivers content from the front of a room to a passive audience, active learning encourages students to participate in lectures for a more engaging approach to learning. To support this important transition, the University implemented Echo360's latest technology.

A culture shift in learning

The University of Adelaide was an early adopter of lecture recording technology, having developed its own in-house system, MyMedia. A ground-breaking innovation for its time, students have used the system to access recorded lectures for the past 13 years.

But the University was ready to move to a platform which could evolve alongside its strategic aims, as Kerrie Campbell, Deputy Chief Information Officer explains. "We needed the capability to go beyond video capture, and move towards greater student engagement with techniques such as small group discovery, flipped learning and Q and A sessions.

"Having researched the market, we felt that Echo360 could provide the next generation platform we wanted to achieve our goals."

Collaborate to innovate

To meet their objective to introduce active learning in all courses by the end of 2018, the University needed the Echo360 technology in place swiftly, but the key was to get every detail of the system right.

The implementation was part of a wider transformation for the University, which also involved the adoption of a new learning management system (LMS).

Travis Cox, Director, Learning Enhancement and Innovation explains. "The two-part implementation was a major milestone for the University. It was rather like performing a heart and lung transplant on a marathon runner while he is still running. The fact that the Echo360 installation was quicker and easier than expected meant that there was very little disruption to the work of students or academics."

FAST FACTS

- **Easy for staff to use:** Lecturers can be more creative in their teaching with an easy button to manage recordings and new learning tools to increase student engagement.
- **Quick to install:** With no disruption to the work of students or academics, Adelaide and Echo360 swiftly implemented a solution which brings the university's active learning vision to life.
- **Exceeding expectations:** The next generation system meets the evolving needs of students and academics in a forward-thinking university.



Enhanced performance

Echo360 technology was installed across the University's campuses, starting with the larger lecture halls and spreading out to the smaller venues, and was up and running straight away.

"The rate of take-up has been quite extraordinary," says Travis. "In March we saw the heaviest use of lecture capture yet, with students viewing 138,000 hours of footage, which represents just under 16 years' content."

User friendly

The University runs an opt-out model, so all lectures are recorded unless a lecturer requests otherwise, and Travis finds that academic staff value a system which is easy to use. "The recordings are scheduled to start automatically, and there's a five-minute warning before the recording ends.

With the ability to pause then continue recordings, lecturers can be much more creative in their teaching. "Take a politics lecture for instance," says Travis. "A recording can be paused for a breakout session where students discuss authentic problems in small groups, and then re-started to capture the feedback.

"We are seeing more and more lecturers requesting additional ad-hoc recordings for off-timetable activities too, such as seminars, focus groups, and practical demonstrations."

Student satisfaction

Students are finding the additional features of Echo360 particularly beneficial. "A lot of students like the ability to change the speed of playback," says Kerrie. "They can replay content more slowly for greater clarification, or speed it up for quick revision. When a student needs to get to grips with very complex material, they can watch parts of the lecture as many times as they like, back in their room, in the library or on the move.

"One student with a disability emailed us to say that being able to view lectures multiple times has transformed their learning experience."

"We are investigating captioning our videos which our ESL students have told us they would find extremely useful in securing their understanding of a concept and the language used to describe it."

New possibilities

The smooth implementation of Echo360 has meant that the University lost no time exploring the range of applications in the system.

"Our students had high expectations because they already had a facility for accessing recorded lectures," says Travis. "So any new system had to be good, but what Echo360 gives us are the tools to try exciting new approaches to active learning, even in our largest lecture theatres.

"Academic staff are building new techniques into their teaching, such as pair-share exercises, small group discussions and student polling, including flipped learning sessions where students access video footage in advance of a lecture, to maximise face to face class time collaborating and discussing with peers.

"One really positive outcome is that the new platform aligns with our existing communities of practice at Adelaide," continues Travis, "where students share their experiences of learning tools, and academics showcase their teaching ideas.

"By working closely with us, and gaining a genuine understanding of our needs, Echo360 provides more than just a lecture recording system, it has opened up the potential for truly engaging, active learning."